

## **Special Education Advisory Panel Meeting Minutes**

Office of Public Instruction  
1300 11th Avenue Conference Room, Helena  
April 29-30, 2010

Members in Attendance: Sharon Lindstrom, Mark Thatcher, Rene Steyaert, Mick Leary (Thursday), Tim Norbeck (Thursday), Denise Herman, Dustin Shipman (Thursday), Christa Seger, Dave Mahon, Susan Gunn, Ken Miller, Cody Preston

Excused Members: Jackie Emerson, Pam Campbell, Wanda Grinde, Mike Leary (Friday), Dustin Shipman (Friday), Terry Galle

Non-Members in Attendance: Tim Harris, Dick Trerise, Frank Podobnik, Dale Kimmet, Karen Crogan, Anne Rainey, Danni McCarthy, Steve York, Marlene Wallis

### **Thursday, April 29, 2010**

Chairperson Sharon Lindstrom called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. The Panel members, OPI staff and visitors introduced themselves. Chairperson Lindstrom requested that the Panel members review the Proposed Agenda and the Minutes of January 14-15, 2010. Denise Herman moved to accept the Proposed Agenda, Mick Leary seconded the motion and the motion passed; the Proposed Agenda was accepted as written.

Following review of the Minutes of the January 14-15, 2010, meeting, Mick Leary moved to accept the minutes, Tim Norbeck seconded the motion and the motion passed. The minutes were accepted as written.

### **OPI Report—Steve York**

Steve York, Assistant Superintendent, Department of Education Services, welcomed the Panel members. He told the members that the Division of Special is made up of hardworking people with much expertise in the field of Special Education.

#### **Race to the Top**

Steve noted that the Race to the Top application, generated from the governor's office in conjunction with the OPI, is due in Washington, DC by June 1. The Race to the Top Web site is [www.racetothetop.mt.gov](http://www.racetothetop.mt.gov).

The Memorandums of Understandings, due May 19, do not obligate districts to be a member; but those not signing the Memorandum of Understanding would not be eligible to participate if Montana receives the grant.

#### **School Improvement Grant—Montana Schools of Promise**

This grant is an intensive intervention provided in a team model with communities, schools and the OPI. It involves five districts: Lodge Grass, Lame Deer, Fraser, Pryor and Hays-Lodge Pole.

## Quaglia Institute

This institute may work with Montana in a number of possible situations, including Schools of Promise, MBI and the SDF School Climate Grant.

## Career and Tech Ed-MCIS

The Division of Career, Technical and Adult Education is collaborating with the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education to improve transitions from secondary to post-secondary education.

## National Common Core Standards

Steve informed the Panel members that Montana is one of 48 states in a consortium to produce the standards in math and language arts. The final standards should be released in late May.

## Web Wise Kids

The OPI, in conjunction with other partners, is attempting to get an earmark from Congress that would support a web-based intervention program to be available free of charge to all Montana Middle Schools and High Schools (grades 5-9). Steve said that bullying is front and center on the nightly news.

## School Foods-Nutrition Efforts

Montana is the first state to use AARA funds to help our school kitchens upgrade. Nearly fifty \$5,000 grants were awarded last year. The grants coordinated efforts to improve school lunches via farm-to-market programs and the fresh fruits and vegetables snack program. Steve noted that the obesity levels of Montana students probably sits at close to 15 percent. This would be about 20,000 students.

## Chapter 55—Accreditation Standards Review

A review of the accreditation standards has begun with a large committee assembled representing a varied group of stakeholders taking on this task.

## **OPI SPED REPORT**

Tim Harris told the Panel that so far 17 Significant Needs grants have been approved. Additional districts will receive a grant as funds not used are returned to the OPI. The applications are funded on a first-come, first-served basis.

A 5 percent increase will be requested for the Hearing Conservation Program. There are 10 Hearing Conservation regions.

The AIM program was mandated as of March 1. The OPI requests a lot of data from the districts and, hopefully, the bugs will be worked out of the system in a year.

There will be a special webinar to introduce a valuable new Web site for the State Advisory Panel (SAP) members, SEA staff responsible for the SAP, parent center staff and other interested

staff. The purpose of the SAP Web site is to offer access to tools and resources that will provide guidance in organizing the work of the SAP, as intended by state and federal regulations.

Frank Podobnik informed the Panel members that the Annual State Application for Federal Fiscal Year 2010 for IDEA funds will be submitted the first part of May. Frank said the all of Montana's policies are in compliance.

#### Compliance Monitoring

Dick Trerise distributed a Frequency Chart for 2009-10 Monitoring. The handout noted the number of schools monitored; timelines; files reviewed; referrals and other important data. A copy of the Chart is part of these minutes.

#### **Joint Meeting with CSPD State Council**

John Copenhaver, Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center, facilitated the joint meeting of the Montana CSPD Council, State Special Education Advisory Panel and the Part C Interagency Coordinating Council. Similarities and differences between the groups were discussed. A chart showing the similarities and differences is a part of the minutes. Suggestions for Parts C/B collaboration included: both groups should work together on common SPP indicators; continue joint CSPD meetings between Part C and Part B; consistency in special education forms for all Part C and Part B agencies; have Part C representatives on regional CSPD councils; communication between Part C and Part B—have a district “representative” for Part C to contact; have Part C be a part of the school district team. These are a few of the suggestions. The complete list is a part of the minutes.

#### **Friday, April 30, 2010**

Chairperson Sharon Lindstrom called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

#### **Verification Visit**

Tim Harris discussed the challenge letter he sent to the Office of Special Education Programs on March 1, 2010. Under Correction of Noncompliance, “OSEP bases its finding on the fact that when the OPI identifies noncompliance as child-specific, rather than systemic, it does not review updated data or otherwise monitor to ensure that the LEA is currently implementing the specific regulatory requirements that formed the basis of the find of noncompliance.”

Tim Harris replied in the challenge letter that “Child specific noncompliance is identified within Montana’s unified monitoring process, which identifies systemic noncompliance and ensures that the LEA is correctly implementing the specific regulatory requirements.” He also noted that “Montana’s monitoring process is designed specifically to align with the OSEP guidance provided in Memorandum 09-02.”

As of this meeting, there has been no response from OSEP.

#### **Public Comment**

There were no public comments.

### **Next Meeting Dates**

The next meeting dates are scheduled for June 7-8, 2010.

### **Proposed Agenda Items**

APR Response  
Levels of Determination  
Verification Visit Results  
Special Education Web Site

### **Adjourn**

Denise Herman moved to adjourn the meeting, Christa Segar seconded the motion and the motion to adjourn passed. The meeting adjourned at Noon.